ONTARIO PARKS

Peter's Woods and Burnley Carmel

NATURE CONSERVANCY

Terms of Reference

Ontario

105-01207/

Additional copies of this document may be obtained from:

http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/pete_planning.html

or from the following locations:

Susan Grigg, Park Planner
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Approval Statement

Ontario Parks is one of six partners working together to protect and enhance key sites in the Rice Lake Plains and to promote long term sustainability of the area.

We are pleased to approve the Terms of Reference for the preparation of a park management plan for both Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve and the Burnley Carmel property, two properties within the Rice Lake Plains.

The Terms of Reference meet the requirements set out in the *Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual*, and represent a commitment by the Nature Conservancy of Canada to follow the planning process and public consultation requirements of Ontario Parks. They will effectively guide this collaborative park management planning process.

A. Ireland-Smith — April 14/04

Adair Ireland-Smith
Managing Director
Ontario Parks

Date

June 2 2004

Michael Bradstreet
Director, Ontario Region
Nature Conservancy of Canada

Date

PURPOSE

The purposes of the Terms of Reference are to:

- *explain why planning is being done together for the Peter's Woods and Burnley Carmel sites;*
- *explain the collaborative aspects of the planning process being used;*
- *outline a program for the preparation of the plan, including a schedule and products; and*
- *identify staff and resources required for the planning process.*

Planning for the two sites is being combined because they are close to one another, share similar ecosystems representative of the Rice Lake Plains area of the Oak Ridges Moraine, and because similar resource stewardship and human use pressures apply to the sites.

The planning process is intended to be a collaborative one building on the longstanding partnership between Ontario Parks and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). This project will extend the partnership into the area of park management planning. Using the planning practices of Ontario Parks as a framework the partners will deliver one management plan, in keeping with the intention to regulate Peter's Woods and Burnley Carmel as one park. The *Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve Management Plan*, approved in 1990 will be replaced by this new plan.

VISION FOR THE RICE LAKE PLAINS

The partners[1] in the Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative envision restoration and protection of sustainable tallgrass prairie and oak savannah habitat through co-operative efforts in conservation science, land stewardship, public outreach and legal protection of land.

This vision will be achieved in harmony with Oak Ridges Moraine legislation, policies and strategies, striking an appropriate balance between natural processes and human activities, and will lead to the long-term protection and enhancement of native species biodiversity on the Rice Lake Plains while fostering awareness and understanding of the significance of the area.

BACKGROUND

Peter's Woods was established by regulation under the *Provincial Parks Act* in 1976. It is classified as a Nature Reserve, one of six classifications within Ontario's provincial parks system. Nature reserves are areas selected to represent the distinctive natural habitats

1 Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority; Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority; Ontario Parks; The Corporation of The County of Northumberland; The Nature Conservancy of Canada; and Wetland Habitat Fund

and landforms of the province, and they are protected for educational purposes and as gene pools for research, to benefit present and future generations.

The 33 ha Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve is located in Concession 8, part of Lot 14 and Lot 15 in the geographic Township of Haldimand in the County of Northumberland about 20 km northeast of Cobourg. It lies on the sandy, northern slope of the Oak Ridges Moraine. Steep-sided valleys have been cut into this slope by surface runoff, springs and the headwater streams of Mill Creek. Estimated to have trees aged between 200 and 300 years, Peter's Woods is one of the oldest mixed forest stands in central and eastern Ontario. Forests composed mainly of Sugar Maple, American Beech, Red Oak or composed mainly of Eastern Hemlock and Eastern White Pine dominate the slopes and well-drained uplands. Poorly drained wetlands support forests of White Cedar, with local concentrations of Red Ash and White Birch. The nature reserve also includes areas of land that have been used for agriculture. Its minimal facilities include a parking lot, trail and vault privies.

The Burnley Carmel land was acquired by NCC through the Ontario Parks Legacy program in 2002. It is comprised of 317 ha in two parcels, one lying about 1 km east of Peter's Woods and the other about 1 km south. It is part of a deep, wide valley surrounded by extensive kame moraines and a bottomland wetland. It lies within the 40,000 ha Rice Lake Plains area, the boundary of which matches the eastern end of the Oak Ridges Moraine. The Rice Lake Plains contain some of the largest areas of globally rare prairie and savannah habitats in Ontario.

Historically, the Rice Lake Plains were covered with tallgrass prairies and oak savannas dominated by massive Black Oak and White Oak, where grasses such as Big Bluestem, Indian Grass and Switchgrass grew together with a diverse range of wildflowers.

Today, the oak savannah and tallgrass prairie of the Rice Lake Plains are fragmented and overgrown with non-native species. Globally these habitats are rare, and oak savannas are considered among the most endangered ecological communities in North America.

The planning process will identify how the lands help to achieve the four objectives of the Ontario Provincial Parks system: protection, heritage appreciation, recreation and tourism. Management policies to maintain or enhance the achievement of those objectives will be developed. Current reports, supporting documents and data as well as other relevant information will be made available for people to review in the development of this plan. Ontario Parks' management plans provide a 20 year planning outlook.

The Nature Reserve classification of Peter's Woods will be retained and will be extended to include the Burnley Carmel properties. The provincial policies for nature reserves will be the framework within which specific policies for management and development of these sites will be developed.

The management planning process will allow for minor boundary amendments where warranted for management purposes. Where appropriate, compatible management arrangements for areas beyond the boundaries may be available through a lease, agreement, exchange or some other means.

Specific issues that may arise during the management planning process include:

- application of era[2] management versus passive evolutionary[3] management;
- potential to re-establish oak savannah and tallgrass prairie habitats and restoration activities that could include removal of non-native species by cutting and burning;
- protection of natural values;
- provision of enhanced eco-tourism opportunities;
- trail development and
- minor boundary amendments.

This collaborative management planning process is likely to be straightforward in nature given the limited number of issues anticipated.

PLANNING AREA

The planning area (see Regional Setting figure on last page.) will include the 33 ha Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve as regulated under the *Provincial Parks Act* and the two parcels of land comprising the 317 ha known as Burnley Carmel. The legal property boundaries are an administrative mechanism and should not be viewed as a physical barrier separating natural areas from the surrounding landscape. The surrounding landscape or greater ecosystem will be considered in the planning process including the ecological, social and economic influences surrounding the planning area. It is the area which most directly affects the planning area. The approved management plan will not have any direct application to lands beyond the planning area.

PLANNING TEAM

Primarily the NCC will undertake technical tasks associated with the project. These tasks include collecting, researching, and synthesizing information related to the biology and habitat restoration aspects of the project. The activities of the NCC will be carried out by Todd Farrell, Stewardship Officer with NCC's Ontario Office at Guelph.

Ontario Parks staff who may be consulted during the planning process include Planning and Research Section staff as follows: Rob Davis, Senior Protected Areas Ecologist; Bill Crins, Senior Conservation Ecologist and Dan Paleczny, Resource Management Coordinator.

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[2] Era management: natural features and conditions are actively managed to prevent natural succession (e.g., prescribed burns can be applied to sustain savannah habitat).

[3] Evolutionary management: natural features and conditions are protected in an undisturbed state, allowing for natural succession.

Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) staff may be consulted including Mike Oldham, Botanist, Herpetologist with the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC); David Heaman, Fire Science Specialist, Southern Region, Peterborough; and Todd Norris, Peterborough District Ecologist located at the MNR Kingston Area office. The technical information will be used to help develop the management prescriptions for the planning area properties.

Development of the management prescriptions, including all consultation and preliminary draft report writing tasks, will be undertaken by a planning team consisting of:

- Todd Farrell, Stewardship Officer, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Guelph;
- John Haagsma, Superintendent, Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve;
- Susan Grigg, Park Planner, South Eastern Zone, Ontario Parks; and
- Dan Radoja, District Planner, MNR Peterborough District.

Ex officio members of the planning team will consist of:

- John Immerseel, Zone Manager, South Eastern Zone, Ontario Parks;
- Barton Feilders, Manager, Planning and Research Section, Ontario Parks;
- Lisa McLaughlin, Stewardship Coordinator, Ontario Region, NCC.

The planning team may consult with academics, knowledgeable stakeholders and others as required for scientific and technical expertise. More information on project staff is included in the Staff Responsibilities section of this document.

INTEGRATION

Integration of the various resource management and stewardship interests will be addressed at appropriate stages during the planning process.

In addition, the planning team may call on other MNR staff or other agencies or organizations for advice, comments, and information as needed throughout the planning process.

An amendment to MNR's 1983 Lindsay District Land Use Guidelines will be required in order to address the recommended provincial park designation of the properties. The park planning process will satisfy any procedures required to amend the District Land Use Guidelines. (The properties are now within MNR's Peterborough District.) Following completion of this amendment it is intended that the properties will be regulated as a provincial park with nature reserve classification.

Draft planning documents will be circulated for review to Ontario Parks, Ministry of Natural Resources (i.e. Kingston Area Office, Peterborough District and Southern Region), and the Ontario Office of the Nature Conservancy of Canada at Guelph for review before the documents are released externally.

Ontario Parks, MNR, and NCC specialists will be asked to identify significant resource values within the planning area and vicinity, and to describe any management options which could be considered within the existing park policy framework.

Meetings or conference calls may be held as required at various stages of the planning process with appropriate Ontario Parks and NCC staff.

Staff from other ministry programs may be asked to serve as resource contacts during the consultation phase of the planning process.

Advance copies of communications products will be shared with the MNR Peterborough District communications information officer.

External Integration

Meetings may be held as required with key stakeholders including the partners to the Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative (listed on page 1) and the Alderville First Nation to discuss the planning process, issues and options.

Reference materials

The following ministry documents and reports, and any updates to them, will be used to guide the planning project and provide information. Additions may be made to this list as they arise.

- Beyond 2000, Ministry of Natural Resources Strategic Directions (2000).
- Earth and life science inventory reports and data for Peter's Woods and the Burnley Carmel property (various dates).
- Environmental Assessment in Ontario Provincial Parks: An Interim Field Reference for Staff. Revised Edition. (1994).
- Environmental Bill of Rights Procedures Manual. (1995).
- Exemption Order MNR 59/2 made under the *Environmental Assessment Act*
- Lease Agreement for the Oak Valley Tree Farm Property. (2002).
- Memorandum of Understanding, Ontario Parks / The Nature Conservancy of Canada Acquisition Program (2002).
- Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual (1994). and
- Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies (1992).
- Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve Management Plan. 1990.
- Provincial park planning policies, procedures and bulletins (various dates).
- Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative, Memorandum of Understanding (2003).

Technical reports and documents pertaining to the planning area will be reviewed and used as appropriate during the technical review phase of planning.

CONSULTATION

A communications check sheet will be developed by the planning team to address First Nation and public consultation throughout the planning process. During the term of the planning process, the public and interested participants will be provided with:

- an invitation to participate in the planning process and to inspect the approved Terms of Reference;
- an opportunity to review background information;
- an opportunity to review the Preliminary Management Plan; and
- an opportunity to inspect the approved Park Management Plan.

Consultation with the Alderville First Nation is an important element of the management planning process that will be undertaken directly by Ministry of Natural Resources staff.

Consultation opportunities are further described in the following sections. If optional planning steps are necessary, additional consultation opportunities will be provided to address them.

Phase 1 - Invitation to Participate

When approval is received, an invitation to participate and notice of opportunity to inspect the Terms of Reference will be sent by mail to local residents, First Nations, agencies, interest groups, municipal and provincial politicians and the local media. A mailing list will be compiled for the project and will be kept up to date throughout the planning process. An *Environmental Bill of Rights* (EBR) notice of a policy proposal will be posted on the Environmental Registry by Ontario Parks. Notices will also be posted at Peter's Woods and the Burnley Carmel sites.

These notices will outline the proposed planning process, identify the opportunities for input and invite people to become involved in the planning process.

Phase 2 - Background Information – Issues and Options

Following the collection of all relevant background information and the preparation of supporting documents, notice of the opportunity to review background file material will be mailed to those on the mailing list noted above. This mailing would include a summary of the significant issues and optional approaches to resolving them. Of particular interest will be a discussion of how restoration of the Burnley Carmel property can be achieved.

In addition a collection of related background information will be kept on file and made available for review at the offices of Darlington Provincial Park and at Ontario Parks South Eastern Zone Office at Kingston.

Phase 3 - Preliminary Park Management Plan

Consultation for this phase will consist of the following:

- distribution of the Preliminary Park Management Plan;
- paid notices in local newspapers;
- updated posting of an EBR notice of a policy proposal on the Environmental Registry;
- consultation event staffed by planning team members;
- meetings with interested groups and agencies, as required; and
- posting updated notices at each site.

The documents will be published in sufficient numbers for distribution to First Nations, adjacent landowners, agencies, municipalities, interest groups, politicians and local libraries. The document will be accompanied by a letter describing the opportunities for participation (e.g. submission of briefs, attendance at consultation event, meetings with staff). The preliminary park plan will explain how input will be considered.

Phase 4 - Approved Park Management Plan

The approved park management plan will be distributed to those on the project mailing list. An EBR notice of a policy decision will be posted on the Environmental Registry by Ontario Parks.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to preparing the Park Management Plan and its various components, the planning team will be responsible for direct consultation with those on the project mailing list. Staff responsibilities will be as follows:

Ontario Parks

John Haagsma, Superintendent, Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve based at Darlington Provincial Park will Co-Chair the planning team, act as the spokesperson for the planning process and will provide ongoing co-ordination throughout the process, including the technical input being provided by MNR staff. Additionally, he will provide ongoing assistance to the project by providing information about current operations, facilities, resource management issues and community concerns.

Susan Grigg, Park Planner, South Eastern Zone, Ontario Parks, Kingston will provide specific guidance and advice regarding the planning process of Ontario Parks and interpretation of policy. The Park Planner will also address the requirements and conditions of Ontario Parks under the *Environmental Bill of Rights* and *Environmental Assessment Act*.

John Immerseel, Zone Manager, South Eastern Zone, Ontario Parks, Kingston will approve final drafts of planning materials from an MNR perspective.

Barton Feilders, Manager, Planning and Research Section, Ontario Parks, Peterborough will endorse all planning documents and recommend approval by the Managing Director of Ontario Parks.

Nature Conservancy of Canada

Todd Farrell, Stewardship Officer, Ontario Office, Nature Conservancy of Canada at Guelph will Co-Chair the planning team and will provide ongoing co-ordination throughout the process, including the technical input being provided by NCC staff.

Michael Bradstreet, Director, Ontario Region, Nature Conservancy of Canada will approve final drafts of planning materials from an NCC perspective.

Note: Other planning team members as identified in the 'Planning Team' section of this document may be assigned various tasks throughout the project.

BUDGET

Technical investigations and related reporting activities will be undertaken by NCC.

Ontario Parks will allocate adequate funding to cover consultation and other elements of the management planning process including expenses such as meeting hall rental, map production, printing and distribution of planning documents.

TABLE 1: Peter's Woods and Burnley Carmel Management Planning Process

Phase of the Planning Process	Description	Product(s)	Consultation & Communication	Proposed Schedule
Phase 1: Terms of Reference & Invitation to Participate	• scope of planning program • schedule • budgeting • responsibilities	Terms of Reference	• Notice that Terms of Reference document is available • Notice of Proposal posted to Environmental Registry	June 2004
Phase 2: Background Information, Issues and Options	• review background information relating to natural characteristics, park development, and land uses • undertake required field investigations (biological, engineering) to augment existing information • requirements defined in the *Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual*	Compilation of Background Information, Issues and Options	• Notice that Background Information, Issues and Options material is assembled and available for review. • Meetings and / or presentations as required • Update EBR posting	Fall 2004
Phase 3: Preliminary Park Management Plan	• requirements defined in the *Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual*	Preliminary Park Management Plan	• Notice and distribution of approved Park Preliminary Management Plan • Staffed consultation event • Meetings and / or presentations as required • Update EBR posting	Winter 2005
Phase 4: Approved Park Management Plan	• requirements defined in the *Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual*	Approved Park Management Plan	• Notice of approval of plan • Distribution of plan to individuals and groups who have made a substantial contribution to the planning process • post EBR Decision Notice	Spring / Summer 2005

Regional Setting